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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Transatlantic Relationship -
Guantanamo President Bush to Hungary Middle East - Olmert and Abbas
Talks North Korea
PARIS - Friday, June 23, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Transatlantic Relationship - Guantanamo
President Bush to Hungary
Middle East - Olmert and Abbas Talks
North Korea

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

President Bush's trip to Vienna and Budapest, Iraq, Guantanamo,
North Korea and the handshake between Olmert and Abbas are today's
leading international stories.

Liberation announces on its front page: "U.S. Army Tightens
Discipline in Iraq." Inside, Pascal Riche comments, in an article
entitled "U.S. Army Tries to Revamp Its Image in Iraq," "The
improving figures in the number of Iraqi civilians killed has been
negatively offset by increasing revelations of cold blooded murders
committed by U.S. soldiers..."

In a separate report Pascal Riche takes another look at the Pew
Research Center findings in a report entitled: "The Gap Grows
Between Islam and the West" and points to the divide that is
separating the perception of Muslims and non-Muslims: "few are those
who consider that relations between the West and Muslims 'are
generally good.'" According to Riche, "One of the poll's surprises
resides in the conclusions on who bears responsibility for the 9/11
attacks: In many Muslim nations (Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt and
Jordan, the majority says the attacks were not committed by Arabs."

Le Monde's editorial, a "Demanding Ally" criticizes the U.S. method
in its fight against Islamic terrorism and Guantanamo, although the
editorial says the EU must fight Jihadists. The daily satirical
column in Liberation by Pierre Marcelle is simply entitled: "We Are
Closing, but When?" in connection with President Bush's comments in
Vienna on Guantanamo. (See Part C)

La Croix profiles U.S. Ambassador to Baghdad, Almay Khalizad in
connection with the cable published in the Washington Post depicting
the difficulties of U.S. Embassy personnel in Iraq: "The cable says
more about the reality in Iraq than all the speeches coming from
Washington... Like all cables, it bears the name of the Ambassador,
but nothing proves he drafted it... Still, the black picture the
cable gives of the local situation is pretty clear... Employees live
in constant fear of being abducted..."

Le Figaro analyzes the new relationship between Libya and the U.S.
and the new wave of "Anglo-Saxon influence" in the country. The
report notes that "since Washington re-opened its diplomatic ties
with Tripoli, English is no longer the language of the enemy... And
U.S. influence," says Pierre Prier "goes well beyond the capital
into the rest of the country..." In a separate report, Pierre Prier
reports that "the country's religious leaders do not appreciate the
latest liberal reforms."

Le Figaro's editorial is devoted to Olmert's talks with Mahmoud
Abbas. (See Part C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Transatlantic Relationship - Guantanamo

"Demanding Allies"

Left-of-center Le Monde in its editorial (06/23): "Since 9/11, which
was truly a declaration of war by al-Qaeda on the U.S., the
Americans and the Europeans are battling together against Bin Laden
and the Jihadists who get their inspiration from him. The
determination of either Washington or other European capitals is
rarely faulted, and cooperation between intelligence services is
very close. In the words of President Bush, the enemy of the 'free
world' is Jihadist warmongers. The goal is clear: their eradication.
But Americans and Europeans disagree on two crucial points: First,
the method: the U.S. has decided to do away with international law
and the rules of war. Guantanamo detainees do not have the status of

'prisoners of war;' suspects have disappeared at the hands of the CIA in their secret prisons; the accused, among them planners of the 9/11 attacks, have not benefited from a fair trial. Finally, the Americans have turned their backs on their values by tolerating torture... The second crucial point (which separates the U.S. from Europe) is the war in Iraq, where a tyrant reigned with no connection with al-Qaeda. Here the U.S. opened a front, which is a land of adventure for the Jihadists. Before the Vienna summit, Jose Manuel Barroso admitted that he feared 'the West would lose its soul in the war against terror...' to which President Bush answered that 'while 9/11 was an episode for the Europeans, for the Americans it had marked a turning point.' And he added that 'he would like to close Guantanamo' but that he could not... Americans and Europeans should be careful. Their divisions, whether over Iraq or the war against terror, serves their common enemy, for whom the war is a battle to the death. The Americans must find the way back to international law. While we must not hold any illusions about the need for the battle of the shadows, it is vital not to fight the enemy with his own weapons, when one pretends to promote peace and democracy. The Europeans must, as demanding allies, continue to work alongside the U.S. in the fight against al-Qaeda, but obtain the closing of Guantanamo, whose image in the world has inspired more Jihadists than any speech by Bin Laden. But they must never lose sight of the goal: to eradicate al-Qaeda and its affiliated networks, who for their part, suffer neither from the qualms of doubt or from divisions."

"We Are Closing But When?"

Pierre Marcelle in left-of-center Liberation (06/23): "When President Bush, in other words 'the boss,' says he would like to close Guantanamo, he is not saying he is going to close the despicable detainee camp which stands as an example of the arbitrary and outlaw... Instead he speaks of 'rights' and 'legal void' and 'gray zones' to explain why the law does not allow him to end this outlaw situation... Everyone will assess ... whether President Bush wants to or can ... close Guantanamo, where America's democracy is on display. A camp must either be open or closed. But between 'would like to close' and 'I will' stands the difference between wishing and doing. By speaking as if he himself were torn, President Bush gives the impression he is a prisoner of Guantanamo. And no longer completely 'the boss.'"

President Bush to Hungary

"Bush Cajoles The New Europe"

Laure Mandeville in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/23): "President Bush continues to cleverly cajole former communist countries in Central Europe, who count among his most faithful allies... In Budapest, President Bush paid tribute to the Hungarian revolution..., an exercise which is not totally selfless. With this tribute to History, President Bush continues to draw the contours of his strategic vision for the future of Eastern Europe, which is key for America's interests in Euro-Atlantic structures... A sign of the importance of Eastern Europe for American foreign policy lies in the number of countries the U.S President has visited: seven out of the eight in five years... This visit to Budapest recalls past ones: before going to Moscow, President Bush is saying to Putin that despite tense relations with Russia, he can have relaxed relations with Russia's old friends... This in turn annoys the Kremlin, obsessed as it is about being 'encircled' by the Americans..."

Middle East - Olmert and Abbas Talks

"Olmert's Game"

Yves Threard in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/23): "Although symbolic, the handshake between Olmert and Abbas in Jordan must not fool anyone... While many would like to compare it to the historic handshake between Rabin and Arafat in Washington in 1993, and see it as a message of hope, its reach will not be similar and in the short term it will not impact on the conflict... While Olmert continues to make repeated goodwill gestures on the international scene, like Sharon in his time, he plans to remain in control of his policy. Unilateralism is in his view the only possible line of conduct: After Gaza, the West Bank... The welcome he received in the U.S., Europe and Egypt, despite the requests made for show, comfort him in his position. He has convincing arguments to make his point when speaking behind the scene... And although Olmert gives the impression he is supporting Abbas, he knows Abbas will not be able to reestablish peace in the territories. While the referendum can reinforce Abbas and the moderates, there will always be fundamentalists to deny its legality... In this context, Olmert's stance is that there is nothing to negotiate. Mahmoud Abbas is alone, prisoner of leaders who reject the premises of a dialogue... While Abbas wants to talk roadmap, Olmert speaks only of humanitarian aid for the Palestinian... As long as Abbas has not contained the Islamists, Olmert will continue on his merry way, and no handshake can divert him from it."

North Korea

"Washington Threatens North Korea"

Alain Barluet in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/23): "The sword of Damocles that North Korea is hanging over the world is creating a tense situation... The Americans have confirmed that their anti-missile system would be up to the task of thwarting an attack if need be... but the head of the NSC warned that the missile shield

has 'limited operation capabilities...' Meanwhile the North Korean threat looks very much like an appeal for a direct dialogue with the U.S. and looks very much like a remake of the Iranian crisis."

STAPLETON